

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Minutes, January 25, 2005

Members present: Joseph Barrell, Deborah Emello, Karl Haglund, James Heigham, Andrew McClurg

Also present: Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Coordinator

7:15 p.m.: All members present, Chairman Barrell opened the meeting.

1. General Business:

1. Preliminary Review of New Library Plans – Heli Tomford, from the Board of Library Trustees, introduced the proposed library project. Richard Marks, project manager, provided an overview of the plans. The new building will be built nearly over the existing location of the current building and have a 22,500 square footprint. The building will have 3 levels – 1 level will be below grade for 60 parking spaces and the 2 levels will be for the library. The Library Trustees met with the Conservation Commission and they stated that they were comfortable with the new building's location and the proposed lot coverage. The proposed building will conform with all zoning except it will probably need a height variance – it will be approximately 39' tall, 4' above the 36' limit. This additional height will allow the center of the building to be open and for natural light to come into the center of the building. Karl Haglund questioned whether the Claflin Street parking lot was considered for the new library. Heli Tomford stated that the Board of Selectmen created a site selection committee which used information from previous site selection groups. Karl stated that this does not make sense since the Town is trying to revitalize town squares, the library should be placed within the Center, not the outskirts.

The Board then had a conversation about the additional parking that would be needed for the new building. The existing building is 29,650 square feet and has 43 parking spaces. The proposed building will be approximately 40,000 square feet and have 81 parking spaces (21 at grade and 60 under ground). The Planning Board agreed that the library design committee is making a good faith effort to meet the parking requirements for their new facility. The Board was pleased with what they had heard and noted that this would be a project that would benefit the entire community. While they could not guarantee that they would approve of reduced parking for the new library, they did note that almost twice as much parking will be provided on-site, a significant amount of on-street parking exists in the area, and that this application would be similar to others that the Board has acted favorably upon in the past.

2. Discussion on Master Plan – the Chair mentioned that he had a meeting with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the issue of problems with the Zoning By-Laws. He stressed that the Town cannot simply put a band-aid on everything; that must be a bigger

vision. The Selectmen asked the Board to put together a proposal on Master Planning based on a \$250,000 estimate.

2. 8:00 p.m. Public Hearing on the Proposed Zoning Amendments Relating to the Demolition Moratorium

James Heigham read the public hearing notice.

Joe Barrell began the discussion on the proposed amendments and paraphrased from the recent McLean decision which found against the Town because the terms of the McLean District By-Law were not specific. As a result, he stated his concern that the amendments were too vague and not engineering terms. The Board then proceeded to review each proposed amendment.

1. Basement and Cellar – Deborah Emello raised a concern about reclassifying space of existing structures and what impact this might have on the number of stories allowed. She also questioned how this might impact property assessments.
2. Grade – all members agreed that this term needed to be redrafted to be clear.
3. Habitable Floor – the Board agreed to delete this definition
4. Building Height and Half Story - significant discussion ensued amongst the Board. Concern was raised about the impact of these definitions on split level homes and their calculations.
5. Section 4.2, Height Limitation – all agreed that reducing the allowed height seemed to make sense. The Board, however, discussed what limit was fair and reasonable.
6. Parking – the Board agreed that more conversation was needed on this issue. Again the Board stated that terms needed to be defined, i.e., paved area, parking space. Jeffrey Wheeler asked the Board whether they wanted to limit all underground garages by Special Permit. Karl Haglund stated that the audience objected to such garages, especially for two-family structures due to the negative impacts on the streetscape. Joe Barrell said that he would like to limit the amount of paving to 12', but allow as many cars within the basement as possible – allow one opening to the garage but allow more cars inside.

On a motion seconded, the Planning Board voted to continue the public hearing to Tuesday, March 1, 2005.

8:50 p.m. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.